



Fall 2000

## Why and how to partner with businesses

*"Available and affordable child care can be an important benefit to attract and retain qualified employees"*

By Gail Gosney

I frequently get calls from child care providers who want to know how to approach local employers to get assistance for their child care facility. Then there are other times when I raise the topic of partnering with businesses, and child care providers look at me as if I'm from Mars.

*Why would you want to partner with local employers?*

In some communities, businesses contribute to the operation of local child care centers by donating supplies, services and even employee volunteers. This is particularly true in smaller communities or in the case of nonprofit child care providers where the child care facility and staff are often viewed by business owners as a community service they should support.

Child care providers have approached local employers for assistance or advice about business-related issues, such as accounting, facility improvement or expansion, zoning, advice on employee benefit packages, and board membership.

Frequently, though, child care providers don't realize that they can approach businesses because child care is a service that employers need. Available and affordable child care can be an important benefit to attract and retain qualified employees.

A business-to-business relationship can be advantageous for the child care provider since it can result in increased enrollments,

employer-subsidies of parent fees, and/or referrals to other companies if the business owner is pleased with the results.

A relationship with a child care facility can also be of benefit to the local business owner/manager since it can help solve problems of employee absenteeism, employee turnover or reduced worker productivity for working parents.

*Well, this is great, you say, for child care centers. They have the staff to market their services and develop business-to-business relationships. But what about me? I am "just" a family home provider - a Mom. How can I "sell" my services to employers?*

This is a good question. It is true that child care centers are sometimes viewed as being more of a "business" than a family child care home. However, the real issue is the quality and availability of the services you provide and how those services address the needs of the business owner to keep their employees comfortably focused on work during work hours.

*So the trick to approaching businesses involves the following steps:*

1. Know what you want and why. Are you going to a local employer because you can't figure out how to pay your payroll next month or because you have a quality service they may be interested in purchasing for their employees? Be clear and truthful with yourself as to what you need (more children, more stable enrollments, business advice, etc). Write up a short description of what you can offer.
2. Be clear why you are approaching each specific business. Are they near your child care facility? Do they have a lot of workers that do shift work and you offer extended hour care? Are they a business that employs a lot of younger people who may have young families?
3. Know what issues local employers are facing. Is there a shortage of qualified labor? Are employees leaving frequently? Are companies facing production issues? Then

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## Olympia LINK

*By Sophia Kouidou-Giles,  
OCCP Chief*

Often, in child care policy circles, we talk about corporate involvement in child care. Sometimes that conversation is wistful - "I wish there were more companies involved in providing child care." Sometimes that discussion is political - "if more companies were involved in child care, it would be a higher priority for policy makers." But most

often, the conversations turn towards what companies could do for children and child care, "if only...."

We are excited about this issue of the LINK because it is the first issue to focus on the needs of employers and how we, as child care providers, can help companies meet the needs of their employees. So we are finally asking, "not what employers can do for us, but what we can do for employers." Child care is a growing field; and many people do not understand the complexities and issues involved.

You are the experts - and companies need your services and expertise. Hopefully, this issue of the LINK will help give you some hints on how to start those conversations. Thank you for all the work you do.

## Seventh Annual Ethnic Heritage Fair

The Seventh Annual Ethnic Heritage Fair will be held on Saturday, Nov. 18th from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Clover Park Technical College. It will be at the College Mall, 4500 Steilacoom Blvd. SW, Lakewood.

For the past seven years, the fair has been sponsored by:

- \* Department of Social and Health Services, Office of Child Care Policy and Office of Foster Care Licensing

- \* Division of Developmental Disabilities

- \* Tacoma-Pierce County Child Care Resource and Referral

- \* Metropolitan Development Council

- \* Clover Park Technical College

The event offers informal and formal

training and facilitates networking among the agencies, the ethnic community, the child care providers and foster home providers. It's also an opportunity for community members to demonstrate their desire to reach out to all cultures and be inclusive in delivering child care services. Participants will earn six clock hours in Early Care and Education from Clover Park Technical College for full attendance and the workshops are STARS approved for the 10-hour continuing education requirement.

For additional information about the Ethnic Heritage Fair, please contact Carol Holland O'Hern, Early Care and Education instructor, Clover Park Technical College, (253) 589-5574, Frances Jorden (253) 593-2758 or Sheila Jelks-Irving (253) 597-4573, Family Child Care Home Licensors, Office of Child Care Policy.

## Ask your licensor

*By Leslie Edwards-Hill  
Licensing Program Manager*

*Are there very many companies in Washington that are interested in setting up child care centers for their employees?*

Corporate child care is not new, though most of the companies who have set up child care centers for employees' children have been on the East Coast. Recently, there has been a growing interest in employer-supported child care among companies in western states. We are seeing a growth here in Washington (especially Western Washington).

The increase in employer-supported child care seems to be related to three factors:

- 1) The shortage of qualified labor in some areas and in specific industries, like high-tech. Employers want to attract and keep highly qualified employees and child care benefits can be a positive factor.
- 2) The move in some industries to a 24/7 work cycle where people are working on shift rotations around the clock, seven days a week. In some cases, people can't work odd shifts unless child care is available.
- 3) Employers are receiving more information about the benefits and costs of child care services for their employees. As larger companies begin supporting child care services, others in the same industry or geographic region begin to consider offering similar benefits in order to stay competitive.

In Washington, there are now 75 companies that support on-site or near-site child care facilities and four companies that provide child care subsidies as a benefit for employees. At least these are the ones we know about. Many other companies offer child care resource and referral services, lactation rooms, parent education seminars and/or dependent care assistance programs for their employees.

## The LINK

The Link is a quarterly publication of the Office of Child Care Policy (OCCP), Children's Administration, Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), for child care professionals. Send questions, comments, or ideas to the Coordinator, The Link, DSHS/OCCP, P.O. Box 45700, Olympia, WA 98504-5700.

Roselyn Oreskovich, *Assistant Secretary,  
Children's Administration*

Barbara Stone, *Director,*

DSHS Division of Licensed Resources

Sophia Kouidou-Giles, *OCCP Chief*

Leslie-Edwards-Hill, *Newsletter Coordinator*

Irenne Hopman, *Editor*

Publications Management, *Design*

## Scholarships/ Conference support available

The Child Care Coordinating Committee (CCCC) has funds that child care providers can use as scholarships for classes and for conference fees. Requests for applications can be made to Akins Communications at (360) 563-4912.

# How to

## build consortiums with businesses in your community

By Nina Auerbach

Child Care Resources, King County's child care resource and referral agency, recently launched a back-up child care program for three employers headquartered in East King County. The program was developed in response to the need for child care during non-traditional hours. A consortium was formed that decided to ask Child Care Resources to manage a back-up child care program.

Back up child care is care that is needed when regular care breaks down for a family. For example, it could be needed when a provider is sick or goes on vacation or for a school-aged child, during school holidays.

The three employers in Redmond are pooling resources and purchasing four back-up child care slots at two child care centers and a family child care home in East King County. Two of the employers are asking employees who utilize the slots to reimburse them through payroll deduction for 50% of the cost of the slots. One of the employers is asking the employees to reimburse them for 100% of the cost of the slots.

How can this happen in your area?

1. Strong leadership is important. In this case, a human services planner was very instrumental in moving the initiative along. She convened the group, hired two consultants to develop the specific models of back-up child care that were considered and also paid Child Care Resources for developing some of the initial survey tools that were used to build the case for back-up child care.
2. There has to be a need for the consortium. In King County, for example, the labor market is extremely tight. Recruitment and retention of employees is a very big issue for area employers. The ability to offer a family friendly environment and child care related benefits makes an employer more competitive. Data

helps. A survey confirmed that back-up child care was an issue for the employees of these companies and that they would be willing to use it (if it were affordable and available).

3. There has to be a viable entity to administer whatever program comes out of the consortium. It could be a child care resource and referral agency, a strong, well organized and entrepreneurial child care program, or another community based organization. But whoever does it must have the ability to accurately project costs, credibility in the child care community, and experience in setting up systems.
4. Building a consortium takes time. Employers are not going to pool resources unless they are convinced that they can trust both the administering entity and the other members of the group.

5. Buy-in from upper management is essential. It is important to have the representatives at the table (who might not be ultimate decision-makers) check in with upper management periodically to ensure that they are on board and supportive with the process.

It is too early to evaluate the success of this project, as it was just launched in August. We have since been approached by a child care center in Seattle that wants to work on a similar consortium model for the downtown area. We will be producing a replication manual that we hope will be of use to others who wish to undertake such a process. It's been challenging, but we are glad that we persisted and have a model that we are testing in our community.

*Nina Auerbach is the Executive Director of Child Care Resources, the child care resource and referral agency for King County, Washington.*

## Provider reminder

### Child Care Micro Loans available

The Child Care Micro Loan program is focused on providing affordable resources to licensed or certified child care centers and family child care homes. The purpose of the loan is to improve the quality and affordability of child care for low- and moderate-income families.

Micro-loans are available in 20 counties. Interest rates vary from five percent to 11 percent. Loan terms are negotiable. Loans are available to family child care providers up to \$5,000 and to child care centers up to \$25,000.

#### For more information contact:

**Benton-Franklin Community Action Committee**  
Adams, Benton, Columbia, Franklin, Grant, Klickitat, and Walla Walla counties  
Contact: Andrea Derr (509) 545-4042 ext. 204  
aderr@bfcac.org

#### Community Capital Development

Seattle, King, Kitsap, Kittitas, Snohomish, Skagit and Whatcom counties (focusing on center providers)  
Contact: Pam Jones (206) 324-4330 ext. 105  
pamelaj@seattleccd.com

#### Metropolitan Development Council

Pierce and Thurston counties  
Contact: Teresa Lemmons (253) 591-7026  
ceo@seatac.net

#### Northwest Regional Facilitators

Spokane, Lincoln, Ferry, Stevens and Pend Orielle counties  
Contact: Kathy Thamm (509) 484-6733  
fcr@iea.com

#### Washington Cash

King, Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom counties (focusing on family home providers)  
Contact: Peter Rose (206) 352-1945  
washcash@nwlink.com



## Region 1

QUEST FOR EXCELLENCE IN

RUNNING A SMALL BUSINESS

BY TIM NELSON

REGIONAL MANAGER

My parents ran a small business for 36 years. When they started they were told that it wouldn't last, that most small businesses fail within the first year, that people wouldn't want to pay for the service.

Somehow, somewhere, year after year they managed to get the money for school clothes, for cavities that needed to be filled, for doctor's bills that accumulated, and the ever-present quarterly taxes.

Child care providers are in much the same boat as my parents. Even though most providers don't view themselves as small business entrepreneurs, running a business is a big part of what they do. In talking with providers it seems most want to do child care because they love children and feel like they are talented in working with young children. This is essential, but like the slogan goes, the job isn't complete until the paperwork is done. Running the business is a big part of what providers do, and in the end, doing it well benefits children.

So I would encourage all providers to brush up on those small business skills. Take a class at the local community college; consult with your accountant on a regular basis; attend training on managing a child care facility; find support through other child care providers who understand the industry's unique trials and quirks. This quest for excellence will benefit you as a provider and the children you serve.

## Region 2

BUILDING THE FUTURE

BY LIZ EGGE, CHILD CARE CENTER LICENSOR

In January 1991, Irwin Research and Development opened its doors to the world of child care. Owner Gere Irwin made an enormous commitment to the families of Irwin Research and Development (then called Irwin Technical College). He had a vision of caring for employee families medically, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. The family unit is highly respected at Irwin Research and family

medical coverage insurance is provided upon hire.

Irwin Research continues to support Noah's Ark Child Care by enabling them to put on a Christmas program off site at a nearby church. The company provides the staff and families with refreshments. Irwin Research provides a person to film the performance. Additionally, Irwin Research provides all employees a Christmas Party at the Yakima Convention Center. Prizes are given out and according to Jan Connor, current director, some of the prizes have included trips, TVs, stereos, etc. One staff member won a set of expensive golf clubs.

A Family Picnic is an annual event at Noah's Ark. Irwin Research pays for all the food and basics for the picnic. The parents bring the salads. Not only the immediate families of the child care are invited, but also their extended family members. Grandpas and grandmas, aunts, uncles, cousins, are welcome to share in the fun. Talk about good parent support...at least 75 percent of the parents turn out with their children.

Irwin Research has provided a bus for the child care children to use for field trips. The bus was purchased specifically for the child care. Noah's Ark Child Care also implemented an "Open House" every year for the parents to come and see what their children are learning and visit with staff members. Irwin Research and Development provides the refreshments.

In honor of the great work done by the staff of the child care, Irwin Research and Development shows their appreciation by providing a dinner at a local restaurant (usually of the staff's choosing). This is typically done during Teacher Appreciation Week.

A common reference made by several people when interviewing for this article

## Regional LINKS



referred to Gere Irwin as a very generous man. Sally Cook, previous director, told this licensor that, "He loves children and would come over quite often and sit in the nursery with the babies. Every time he is blessed in his business he shares a bonus with his employees, including the child care staff." Gere Irwin truly believes that "it is better to build children than to repair men."

## Region 3

THOMAS RETAINS LUMMI TRADITIONS

BY MARILYN CHU, CHILD CARE CENTER

LICENSOR & LARRY LEVINE, REGIONAL MANAGER

Carol Thomas has been the director of the Lummi Nation Child Development Center on the Lummi Nation Reservation near Bellingham for nine years. Carol is widely regarded as an excellent director and early childhood program mentor.

Carol is from Vancouver Island, Canada and is a member of the Nanaimo Tribe. Carol remembers always wanting to be a kindergarten teacher. Her grandfather instilled in her a love of learning and told her that she would graduate from high school.

She remembers missing her parents and grandparents terribly while at Catholic boarding school from age four through second grade. Her grandmother would sometimes travel to her boarding school and stand on the other side of the street just to

look at her. “The nuns wouldn’t even let me hug my Grandma,” Carol remembers sadly.

“My Mom went into boarding school knowing our language and came out not knowing it. You have to be with your family to bond. My mother had little parent education. You lose a lot...one generation of caring and loving.”

Carol uses Lummi Language tapes with the babies and toddlers. “That way when they go to Lummi Head Start, they already know the sounds and they learn the language faster.” She also never loses hope for the future because for children, “...every day is a new world, and we are rejuvenated by children’s view of the world.”

Cultural relevancy in the Lummi center has an everyday feeling. All but one of the staff members are American Indian. The community knows the staff. “The parents trust that their children will be looked after. They now feel that they don’t need to go to Auntie down the road to care for their child. When parents say, ‘bundle my baby’ we know what they are talking about. We are truly culturally aware.”

Carol’s vision for the center is the opposite of the oppressive boarding school experience of so many Indian families. Instead, she would like the work of the center staff to be more like her grandfather’s teaching. She recalls that he “was so gentle. He taught by showing rather than telling. Elders show you how to do things...then you retain it. We were not raised to (only) sit and listen.”

Carol recalls meeting a teenager who asked, “Carol, how’s our pink quartz doing?” This was one of her former preschoolers who still was in love with geology because of her introduction to it when he was four years old.

What makes Carol an effective director? She builds trust with the families, connects them to the tribal community, maintains cultural relevance, uses humor, supports families, is flexible, fair and patient while always holding out a vision of what’s possible for staff, parents and children. Carol also models another quality of a successful educator. She is a reflective practitioner because she draws on her training, experience, skills, humor, personal and cultural values to do her work.

## Region 4

### CHANGES IN PERSONNEL

BY JOEL ROALKVAM, LICENSING COMPLAINT

### INVESTIGATOR

The word of the month in Region 4A is “change.” Region 4A is undergoing a wave of personnel changes as longtime advocates of quality child care move on to new phases in their work careers.

You have probably all heard by now that Secretary Lyle Quasim and Deputy Secretary Charley Reed retired from DSHS as of June 2000. Lyle and Charlie had been at the tiller of this agency since 1995, the longest tenure of anyone in the history of the agency.

Two other losses have not received as much media attention, but will be felt just as deeply. First, Barb Stone will be retiring from her position as director of Division of Licensed Resources, of which OCCP is one part, effective this fall. Barb worked hard to support OCCP during her tenure, and she will be missed.

Also, Abel Hewitt has accepted a position as acting field manager with Adult and Aging Services. Abel has been the regional manager of OCCP Region 4A for many years, and is familiar to almost everyone who has anything to do with child care in King County and throughout much of the rest of the state.

Joyce Thomas, lead clerical support person, has also left the Region 4A OCCP office, and has accepted a position at the regional headquarters on Mercer Street. Joyce’s calm demeanor and long-time knowledge of the workings of child care will be missed by all. We wish all these folks the best. We sure will miss you.

## Region 5

### CHILD CARE AS AN INDUSTRY

BY TERESA LEMMONS

### METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Child care is one of the fastest growing industries in all of America. Many things are affecting the market place. The number of women entering the workplace has been on a steady incline since the 1970’s, while at the same time the birth rate continues to climb.

Two-parent families with two incomes are a mainstay of America today, and single parent families are on the rise. Welfare reform has had its input, with mandatory work requirements forcing many to seek child care.

Recent research I conducted by using the American Business disc (SIC codes) offered a revealing look into the general business understanding of the child care market. There were no realistic numbers on the providers in the region. There was no substantive information on the dollars spent on child care, or the size of the industry based on dollar volumes. There was no information on the number of licensed providers vs. non-licensed care providers. The national statistics indicated that approximately 176,611 child care providers (homes and centers) were taking care of all of America’s children. It even lumped day care for pets into the same category.

This is general data available in the business sector, not information collected from Child Care Resource and Referral, but it shows that child care is still not viewed as a viable industry in business circles.

What does all this mean and why is it important? It means that child care is still taking a back seat as a viable business and industry. It means that no one truly knows the impact child care has in our region or in the nation. It also means that those in the industry need to stand up and be counted. You represent a multi-million dollar marketplace. You provide an incredible service for our children and our communities.

Join your child care associations and take part in the many ways in which you can impact your industry. Help give yourselves a future by taking initiative in the legislative issues that impact your world. Encourage friends who are thinking of doing child care to become licensed and be a part of it all.

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## Region 6

### INTRODUCTIONS

By LINDA ROBERTSON

CHILD CARE CENTER LICENSOR, ABERDEEN

Hello everyone. I am Linda Robertson, the newest child care center licensor in Region 6. From my desk in Aberdeen, I serve Grays Harbor, Pacific, Wahkiakum, Cowlitz, and bits of Lewis and Thurston counties. Some of you I have spoken to or met since I began my new job duties on April 3, and I very much look forward to meeting and working with many others of you as I go along.

I grew up in Albuquerque, New Mexico and moved to the Tri-Cities with my family in 1984. I was still in high school at the time and I found solace and occupation in an internship program working with various social service agencies including a city preschool center, and a facility for children with disabilities. My educational background is in early childhood development and family support. I studied at Washington State University, did an internship with children in a mental health center, and did my thesis on outdoor play environments. After graduating, I moved to our beautiful, very western Washington area and began working with Head Start in Grays Harbor and Pacific counties.

I worked with Head Start for 14 years in a variety of job roles including classroom teacher (I still remember the recipe for playdough) and finally as early childhood and health services specialist. Along the way, I facilitated parenting classes, provided evening child care, received and conducted federal reviews, and co-directed a summer day camp. Recently, I have worked as an employment and training specialist until happily accepting the center licensor position.

I am excited to return to the child development community to pitch in, as all that I know and believe shows me that meeting the needs of and nurturing the growth of infants, children and youth is the most important work there is. I believe that licensors and providers, as professionals, are partners with families and communities, and with each other in this most important task. Working together to make our child care programs the very best they can be is my goal.

## Need data to build your business case? Try your local resource and referral agency

By Kathy Thamm

So, you have found a business that may need child care for its employees. You want to talk to the owner about contracting with you for services, but you don't have enough information. There are many sources for information: your local Chamber of Commerce, your local Economic Development Council, or your local library (they usually have state and local business directories).

Find out as much as you can about the business before you contact them - size of company, type of product or service, geographic region they serve, hours of work, and demographics of employees (how many have children under age six for instance).

The local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agency may be able to help provide some of this information as well. They will at least know if the employer has already been seeking help in solving child care issues for her/his employees.

There are 17 Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies that serve all the counties of Washington State. If a family child care provider or center owner wants assistance in determining how to approach businesses, CCR&R can help. Call the Washington State Child Care Resource and Referral Network at 1-800-446-1114 or email [childcarenet@childcarenet.org](mailto:childcarenet@childcarenet.org). The Network staff will connect you with your local CCR&R.

Once you contact an employer, they may be interested in your a business plan. Don't panic. A business plan is simply a plan

or strategy that will help guide your business. It includes the services that you offer, your educational background with young children, supply and demand for your services in your geographic area, a description of your typical customer, your competition (other child care services in your area), a marketing strategy, your current record keeping system and business policies, and your income projections for the next 12 months.

CCR&R can help by running rate reports for your geographic area, giving data about other child care services (or lack of these services) in your community, offering classes on basic record keeping, planning a marketing strategy and business policy development.

Local CCR&R's sometimes receive calls from employers wanting to start on-site or near site child care. They can connect employers with established child care businesses located near the employer. They will also assist with child care needs surveys and offer data about the current supply of child care.

The goal of the local CCR&R is to increase child care capacity by encouraging new child care where needed and assisting established businesses with new market and funding strategies for the future. Take advantage of this wonderful resource. Call 1-800-446-1114 today.

*Kathy Thamm is the Director of Family Care Resources, the Child Care Resource and Referral agency for Spokane, Lincoln, Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille counties.*

## Attendance records and child care subsidy payments

DSHS may review your billing for the child care subsidy program. If your attendance records do not support the amount you have claimed, DSHS will write an overpayment. You are responsible to repay the department in case of an overpayment. (You are entitled to absent days for certain authorizations.)

It is very important that licensed/certified child care facilities keep attendance records.

You must keep attendance records as described in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) for:

- Licensed/certified Family Child Care Homes WAC chapter 388-150 (Minimum Licensing Requirements for Family Child Care Homes.)
- Licensed/certified Child Care Centers chapter WAC 388-155 (Minimum Licensing Requirements for Child Care Centers.)

Licensed/certified child care providers must keep attendance records and invoices for state paid children on the premises for five years.

Contact your licensor for a copy of the Minimum Licensing Requirements.



# Everything you always wanted to know about dealing with business executives you learned from toddlers

By Sandra Burud

Perhaps you are hoping to get a local business to support your child care program. You may wish they would...

- \* Contribute equipment or in-kind services
- \* Pay part of their employees' fees
- \* Give you business advice or serve on your board of directors

*It will help to understand that business executives and toddlers have a lot in common:*

## 1. They have a short attention span.

Executives have heavy schedules full of decisions; your requests should be simple and clear and sensitive to their shortage of time.

## 2. Threatening them doesn't work.

Instead, help them understand the consequences of their choices in a non-emotional way. (You might say, "Last year one of your employees told me she quit because child care costs a large part of what she earned. I have a proposal here for the company to pay part of the fees, so you won't lose people like these.") Also, be careful not to promise what you can't carry through on in the long run, like a discount for their employees, with no contribution from the employer to offset it.

**3. They are egocentric** - focused on the self-interest of the business. Their responsibility is to make the business successful, so your request should help them solve a business problem. It could — 1) make it possible for employees to be on time to work or not be interrupted during the day; 2) cause employees to see the company as an even better place to work; and 3) make employees less apt to quit because of child care problems. You might tell them that when an hourly employee leaves, it costs 75 percent of their annual salary to replace them, when the extra time it takes them,

their supervisor and co-workers to deal with finding and training a replacement are included.

## 4. "I want it now" is a favorite phrase.

Successful businesses are usually fast-paced, and timing is critical. Your request should fit with their deadlines. Requests that cost money must be considered when budgets are being approved, which is usually in late summer or fall.

**5. Each one is unique.** You should observe, ask questions and know that each company has a "personality" and way of operating. The better you understand who makes decisions and what makes them "tick," the easier it will be to get their help.

**6. Transitions are hard.** It is a big change for executive to consider the world of child care as their concern. And it's a foreign world - there rarely are tears and hugs, and discussions about "poop" in board room meetings. They may be rightly concerned that if they become more involved in employees' personal lives that they may receive complaints instead of praise and even expose the company to possible liability law suits.

**7. They like stories.** Citing specific examples they can relate to makes it all more real. Remember to protect people's confidences, though.

**8. They are sharp;** you have to be on your toes to keep up with them. You need to think through the implications of what you are asking them - perhaps they have employees who are not in your program or at other sites that they could not help in the same way. Consider all of the pros and cons for them.

## 9. Trust and respect are watchwords.

Ultimately listening to what they are telling you and respecting their needs and goals are the best way to make a successful relationship work.

**10. Develop win-win scenarios.** Look carefully at the employer's needs and offer solutions that will also help you build your enrollment or develop business-to-business relationships that will help your business thrive.

*Sandra Burud is a nationally-known writer and consultant who has worked with companies across the United States on work-life benefit programs and child care issues.*



# Businesses can be partners

(Continued from page 1)

try to find out if these issues are related in any way to child care problems

4. Know something about the business you are approaching. Read the newspapers, look up the company on the Internet or in the business directory at your local library, talk to the Chamber of Commerce or check with neighbors and friends to find out what they know.

5. Know the language of business. Most owners/managers are interested in their employees, but they are also interested in their "bottom line." You need to talk to them about their ability to recruit and retain workers and how child care can be a benefit that help them attract and keep employees. Employers will also want to be able to calculate how their investment in child care will result in savings through reduced turnover and increased productivity. (There are some child care consultants who are experts in this area; often your local child care resource and referral agency can point you toward such a consultant.)

6. Know something about how employers can support child care costs for their employees.

- They can provide vouchers which will help reduce the costs for the employee (this is a direct benefit to the employee and may require a revision of the company's benefit plans).
- They can reserve slots with you for their employees for which they will only pay if the parent does not show up— you

determine how long you will leave the slot open. This arrangement is usually secured through an annual contract with the employer. The advantage for the employer is that they do not need to tie this directly to a benefit package. The disadvantage is that a purchase of service from you may limit parent choice.

- They can purchase enhanced child care referral services through a for-profit company or the local child care resource and referral agency.
  - They can set up a Dependent Care Assistance account for their employees, which allows employees to pay for child care with pre-tax dollars - this is not a subsidy, but does save the parent some money on income tax.
  - They can contract for slots with a child care provider who will give them a discount for services (obviously, this option is not advantageous to the child care provider).
7. Make sure you are comfortable with the information you are presenting before you talk to an employer. There are many resources available to you to help you develop your presentation for an employer.
8. When approaching a company, make the contact a business-to-business relationship. You own/operate a business too. You have a service to offer the company. Do your homework and practice so you feel confident before making the appointment. And remember to ask for help and advice when you need it. Good luck!!!

*Gail Gosney is the Business Liaison with the Washington State Office of Child Care Policy and the Office of Trade and Economic Development. If you have questions on how to approach businesses, contact Gail at (360) 725-4034 or e-mail at [gailg@cted.wa.gov](mailto:gailg@cted.wa.gov).*

## Want information on your child care? Call the toll-free number

The Legislature passed a bill this last session to create a toll-free number for parents to call for information about their child care home or center. Normally, parents would have to call individual offices for this information. The toll-free number will simplify the process for parents allowing them to call one central number. They can learn general information such as:

- if their child care provider is licensed,
- if any valid licensing complaints and founded CPS complaints have been made to the department by other parents,
- basic information about capacity, ages of children served, and the length of time a provider has been licensed.

The licensing information specialist will transfer any parent seeking a new child care provider to the Washington State Child Care Resource and Referral Network. This specialist will also transfer calls to intake workers and licensors if the parent wishes to report a licensing violation or obtain more specific information regarding their child care provider.

Parents may call 1-866-48-CHECK to access this information line.

### The LINK

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services  
Children's Administration  
Division of Licensed Resources  
Office of Child Care Policy  
P.O. Box 45700  
Olympia, WA 98504-5700

Bulk Rate  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 297  
Olympia, WA